

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Steny Hoyer today met with leading advocates of full-service community schools to discuss his introduction of the "Full-Service Community Schools Act." This bill, which will be introduced later this week, authorizes funding for full-service community schools, which are public elementary or secondary schools that coordinate multiple federal, state and local educational and social service programs in partnerships with school districts, community-based organizations and public/private partnerships. Congressman Hoyer helped establish "Judy Centers" across Maryland, which are full-service schools.

"I am extremely proud to introduce the Full-Service Community Schools Act. My late wife Judy was a dedicated educator who taught me about the importance of early education and the potential of full service schools. The full-service schools supported by this Act will be able to improve their coordination, delivery, effectiveness, and efficiency of services to children and families," Hoyer said.

"Full-Service Community Schools are valuable resources in local communities because they provide for the seamless integration of academic, developmental, family, and health services to children and their families. These schools, in addition to strengthening local communities, ensure the best use of resources, which will result in more cost-efficient services," Hoyer continued.

Educational community experts and advocates applauded Congressman Hoyer's introduction of the Act following the meeting today.

"I applaud Congressman Hoyer for his efforts to establish full-service community schools. In Maryland, we have achieved impressive results through our Judy Centers, which build school readiness by supporting families and fostering young children's physical, social, linguistic, and cognitive abilities. This legislation will give communities across the nation the resources to replicate the success we have had in Maryland," said State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick.

Paul Houston, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators said, "It is often said that it takes a village to raise a child, but we rarely ask, 'what does it take to raise a village?' It takes the leadership of schools who can work with communities to create a web of support around children and families. AASA enthusiastically supports this initiative as one way to get children ready for school every day and engaged in learning."

"This Act will provide grants to local partnerships, composed of local school districts and community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other public/private entities, for purposes of coordinating at least three services at a school site. These services may include: early childhood programs; literacy/reading programs for youth and families; parenting education activities; community service/service learning; job training/career counseling services; nutrition services; primary health and dental care; and mental health preventive and treatment services," concluded Hoyer.

The Full-Service Community Schools Act would provide \$200 million for Fiscal Year 2005 through 2009, with 75 percent of the funds allocated for local grants, 20 percent to state grants, and the remaining funds used for technical assistance and evaluation.

The Act also specifies that grants may be allocated to state educational agencies that collaborate with at least two other state government agencies to plan, coordinate and expand the development of full-service community schools. Grants can also be used to provide technical assistance and training at full-service community schools, and collect and evaluate data about the progress of full-service community schools.

The legislation also creates an Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Labor, to consult with the Secretary of Education on the development and implementation of full-service community schools. The committee will identify strategies to improve the coordination of federal programs that are part of full-service community schools, consult with local and state grantees, and issue an annual report to Congress.

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